

Washington, DC – U.S. Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) met Wednesday with Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and Mexico's Secretary of Gobernacion Fernando Gomez Mont at a Border Roundtable Luncheon. Homeland Security Assistant Secretary John Morton and U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Alan Bersin were also in attendance.

The roundtable participants, which included members of the Congressional Border Caucus, discussed how to control violence and enhance border security in the region and how to maintain and improve the strong trade ties shared by Texas and Mexico.

"Securing our border region is paramount and impacts both personal safety and national security," said Congressman Rodriguez. "I have proposed a series of measures – including asking Governor Perry to direct more of the federal money we appropriate to the sensitive border areas – and will continue to make this a priority. Meeting with Secretary Napolitano and our Mexican counterparts on this issue helps us all work together and stay focused on our collective goal, which is the eradication of violence and the safety of our border communities."

Congressman Rodriguez sits on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security and represents one of the largest Congressional districts in the country with nearly 800 miles of border with Mexico.

"The border region is not like any other region in the state or country," Congressman Rodriguez said. "We have special challenges and in order to meet them, we need to ensure that this region gets the resources it needs to protect our communities from threats and violence."

Congressman Rodriguez proposes a \$15 million annual increase in Operation Stonegarden grant funding from \$60 million to \$75 million. This money would go to fund border law enforcement agencies with equipment, personnel and other needs. He also proposes hardship pay for border agents working in rural communities, increasing the presence of Customs and Border Protection officers at ports of entry and elevating funding levels for the Southwest Border Prosecution Initiative to reimburse counties for the resources they expend prosecuting criminals.

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